

For the Journal.

MAGNOLIA, HARRISON CO., IOWA, }
October 16, 1854. }

Mr. CLARK—Dear Sir,—After my best respects to you, I will inform you that we are all well at present, and hope that these few lines may find you in like favorable circumstances. I promised to write to you, but have delayed it thus far to have something to write, and hardly know where to begin now.

I went through Perrysburg, March 14th, on my way to Iowa, and landed at Kanessville, on the Missouri river, the last day of March, and had a very pleasant trip. I came by railroad from Toledo to Rock Island, then came by wagon the remainder of the way. I came through Scott, Muscatine, Johnson, Iowa, Poweshiek, Jasper, Polk, Dallas, Guthrie, Adair, Cass and Potawatamie counties, and settled within one mile and a half of Magnolia, the county seat of Harrison county, 40 miles from Council Bluffs City. The eastern counties surpass everything for good country I ever saw. The country lays rolling, is fertile, with plenty of good water all the way into Dallas county; from there it is more broken. Timber is very scarce except through Polk county, where it is more plenty. This county is more hilly than the eastern, but timber is the plentiest of any part of the state I have seen, and the prairies are very fertile and easily cultivated, and produce good crops of all kinds. Crops are very good this season, wheat will average from 20 to 30 bushels per acre, corn 60, oats 60, and potatoes all you want to dig.

This is a pleasant country to live in; the air is very pure and clear; you can see an object 15 miles as plainly as you can 3 or 4 on the prairies in Wood county. It is very healthy, we had no sickness here this season. This country is well adapted for raising stock of all kinds. The wild grass is better quality than I ever saw east. As for game, there are some deer and elk, and the bottoms abound with geese, ducks and brant, and the water is prolific with fish, such as buffalo, pickerel, pike and cat; the cat grow very large; I caught them myself that weighed 175 pounds. The soil is composed of a black limestone loam. Wild fruits are very plenty, such as plums, gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries, and they grow much larger than they do in the east.

We have had the pleasantest fall I ever saw. We had no frost till the 10th of October, and but little since.

Yours, &c.

JOSIAH CROM.

The War.

The Siege of Sebastopol—The White Tower blown up by the British—Quarantine Fort silenced by the French.

Some impression has at length been made on the besieged fortress—how much may be learned from the following dispatches:

The Paris Moniteur publishes: "A letter from Varna, dated Oct. 21, says that the fire of the allied land batteries was opened at half past one o'clock on the 17th against Sebastopol. At the same time the allied fleets attacked the forts at the entrance of the port; the English those at the left and the French those on the right. The English blew up the outer fortifications on the left, (this is supposed to mean 'the white tower,') while the French silenced the quarantine fort on the right."

From Vienna, 28th October. "Lord Westmoreland received a dispatch yesterday, according to which the guns of the two forts, at the entrance to the harbor of Sebastopol, were dismounted by the artillery of the allied fleets. The allies had about one hundred and five men wounded, and one-third that number killed."

From Vienna, Sunday, 29th October.—"The Fremden Blatt, newspaper, yesterday received news of date 19th, from the Crimea. It was said that the ships discontinued the bombardment because the battery and quarantine fort, at which they fired, was silenced. The loss on the part of the allies was nearly ninety."

From the camp before Sebastopol, October 19, it is said: "As accounts leave, the French have silenced the quarantine battery, and continue their attacks against fort Alexander, and the loopholed walls that defend the town of Sebastopol on the southwestern

side. It was not without loss that the allied squadron assisted in this combined and concentrated attack. They lost altogether one hundred killed and two hundred wounded in three days. An aid-de-camp of the French Admiral was struck by a shell on the deck of the Ville de Paris, the flag ship. The Agamemnon, bearing the flag of Sir Edmund Lyons, had suffered severely, and the Retribution, Capt. Drummond, had a mast shot away. Of the casualties on land we have no account; but the Russians confess to five hundred killed, including Admiral Kornileff."

It will be seen from the above that these successive reports refer to the assault of which we had the Russian statement, per last steamer from Europe.

Summing up these dispatches, the London Times says, editorially, "we are still without the means of adding any fact of importance to the intelligence previously received from the seat of war. The dispatch forwarded by Lord Westmoreland on the 27th, had been six days on the road from Varna to Vienna, and it conveys a very incomplete notion of the operations which commenced on the 17th. Storeships of the French and English squadrons, including Admiral Hamelin's flag-ship, the Ville de Paris, and Admiral Lyon's flag-ship, the Agamemnon, undoubtedly took part in the first attack, and the combined squadrons lost about three hundred men, in killed and wounded; but we are left to conjecture the duration and real effect of this engagement. Unfortunately, the official telegraphic dispatches, on which alone reliance can be placed, are so unskillfully framed, that they rather increase than diminish the uncertainty under which we labor, and we must wait for the arrival of our own correspondence and dispatches."

Private information leads us to suppose that the "quarantine battery" reported to have been destroyed by the French, was an earthwork which the Russians threw up during the 10th, 11th, and 12th of October, and from which they threw shell, with annoying effect, into the French trenches.

Russians say that no Damage was Done.

The Russian embassy at Vienna had received a dispatch dated from Cernovitz, morning of 28th October, stating that the bombardment of Sebastopol was carried on vigorously to the 20th, but without much damage to the defenses.

Also from Odessa, October 25th, saying, "the bombardment of Sebastopol was continued up to the 23d, but nothing decisive had occurred."

The Russian official statement reads thus: "St. Petersburg, Oct. 26.—Prince Menshikov writes under date of the night of the 20th—'We return the fire of the enemy with success. The damage caused to the fortifications is trifling. The fire from the enemy's ships has not been renewed. A part of our reserve has arrived, and the remainder is expected.'"

A Breach Effectuated.

The Paris Moniteur of the 30th confirms previous intelligence by saying: "A letter from Varna informs us that a French steamer, which left the Crimea on the 21st, confirms the news respecting the destruction of the two outer forts of Sebastopol. Moreover, the land batteries had made a breach. The allied armies were only waiting for the opening of a second breach in order to make the assault."

Successful Sortie of the Russians.

According to a Russian official dispatch, published in the Kreuz Zeitung, dated St. Petersburg, October 23, the siege continued uninterruptedly up to the 23d; the fortifications had suffered but little. The attack from the sea had not been renewed. The Russians had made a successful sortie, and a French battery of eleven guns and eight mortars had been destroyed. Lord Clanricarde's son, Lord Dunkellin, was taken prisoner.

Michael and Nicholas, youngest sons of the Czar, arrived at Odessa on the 15th.—Thence they would proceed, in the course of a day or two, to Kaischenoff, Prince Gortschikoff's head quarters, in order to take active service in the army. Previous to their leaving St. Petersburg a solemn religious service was held in presence of thirty-five

thousand of the army; the Czar, his sons, and the troops knelt on the field and invoked the blessing of Heaven on their arms. Alexander is at Warsaw with the guards, and Constantine is the only son now remaining with the Czar.

The Baltic.

Most of the French ships have reached home. The British ships are yet cruising.

Ostentatious preparations are making in England for the siege of Cronstadt, which, it is stated, will be the first act of the spring campaign. The British war department has ordered the construction of 120 gun-boats, carrying each two heavy guns, and of 40 floating batteries, carrying each 70 guns—total, 2,800 guns—to be ready by the opening of navigation in the spring. The French are likewise making preparations.

There is a rumor—but it comes from Stockholm—that the Baltic fleet will, next spring, be under the command of Sir Edmund Lyons.

Napier is too sick to leave his ship.

Sebastopol—The chances of reducing it considered—Difficulties with which the besiegers have to contend—The havoc of the cholera among the allied troops—Strength of the garrison supposed to be 45,000 men—Active force of the besiegers about the same, &c., &c.

[London Times correspondent.]

CONSTANTINOPLE, Oct. 12.—The seeming tardiness of the operations against Sebastopol disappoints the large number who, from a state of depression and gloomy foreboding, passed into the opposite extreme of exultation after the battle of Alma. When the first encounter with the enemy terminated in such brilliant and decisive success, there was a general expectation that the end of the campaign would not long be delayed; and after it became known that the enemy had retreated past two strong positions which lie between the first battle-field and the walls of Sebastopol, the supposed discouragement and terror of the enemy strengthened the anticipations of success.

But though the allies have nothing to regret in the course of events as yet, and though the capture of the Russian stronghold is as certain as any military event can be, yet, as all men with any experience of war declared beforehand, the attack on such a place cannot be made without due preparation, or success attained without serious loss.

The chief enemy is one against which no courage or skill can avail. Sickness still continues its ravages. The effective British infantry does not now exceed sixteen thousand men. The probable loss in our part of the invading force from cholera, fever, and the sword of the enemy is about five thousand men, since the expedition sailed. Not, indeed, that such a number are dead, but there are so many disabled by wounds, and weakened by disease, that the force of the army is lessened by nearly a fifth.

Lord Raglan is seriously hindered by the presence of so large a train of sick, and is desirous to send them out of the country as fast as possible. I mentioned some time since that many of those at Scutari were deemed convalescent, and sufficiently recovered for actual service. A few days later two steamers full of them were sent up to the Crimea; the men were in good spirits, and except that they were a little pale, seemed to have perfectly recovered from their late prostration. But the result has proved how little fit any but the strongest and most healthy men are to bear the hardships which the army have to undergo; and how vain it is to trust the appearance of recovery when the malady has been of so depressing a kind as Bulgarian fever or army dysentery. Three-fourths of the men were found unfit for any service whatever; many of them fell ill within a day or two after setting foot on shore; and they are now swelling the sick list in the rear of the army, and to no small extent hampering its operations, while they spread discouragement and apprehension among those who remain untouched. The loss of the French is said not to be proportionally to our own; but the truth cannot be known with accuracy, for the French officers are very secret in all that concerns the internal economy of the forces under

their command, and the separation of the two armies precludes all facilities of observation.

The allies have now about two hundred guns in position, and in a few days operations may be expected to commence. Two great difficulties are spoken of as likely to delay success or cause it to be more dearly purchased. It is impossible to attack the place by regular siege operations, for the earth on every side of Sebastopol is found to be less than a foot in depth; in some places the solid rock is only four inches below the surface. This quite disposes of the question of parallels, zigzags, and all the engineering technicalities which come under the name of regular approaches. It only remains to batter the wall and forts at a long range, and then to carry the place by assault. However, little is lost by the impossibility of prosecuting a regular siege, for there is no doubt that at this season of the year such operations would extend over a term too long to be ventured on with safety to the expedition. The second difficulty consists in the fact of the ground being divided by ravines, so that the troops marching up to the assault will be separated, and the different bodies unable to render assistance to each other.—The English, who are in the post of honor, at six miles distance from their ships, and who have to drag their artillery and supplies from Balaklava over a rocky road, will have the hardest task. They hold the summit of a ridge, and at a long range can fire with some effect on the Russian outworks, but as they descend the slope their force is broken into two or three parts, while they are exposed to a fire similar to that which destroyed so many brave men at Alma.

The French and Turks, on the left, will be less exposed, and their efforts will be probably directed to make a breach in the wall which secures the western side of Sebastopol. The labor of our allies has as yet been far inferior to our own. The French rest on Cape Chersonese, and are within three miles of their ships, in a position where they may, indeed, suffer from the fire of the garrison, but are protected from the attack of the Russian army which holds the field. It is now ascertained that eight Russian ships have been sunk at the entrance of the bay. They are in two lines, the second line covering the interstices of the first. The bay at the point where they lie is about seven hundred yards across, so that the entrance is effectually barred to ships-of-the-line, though steamers might manage to obtain an entrance, the more so as the masts of the sunken vessels still indicate their position. At the head of the harbor, which runs up to the east of the town, a large line-of-battle-ship—probably the Twelve Apostles—is moored, and can be used as a battery, but there can be no doubt that it will be speedily destroyed by the fire of the English guns.—They have established a steam ferry between the town and the north side of the bay, by which they can be reinforced by the troops marched down from the interior, or retreat when the town is no longer tenable. The arrival of Luder's is now announced as certain, and report says that Gortschakoff himself is present, either in Sebastopol or with the army which is to operate in the field.—The Russians appear to be well provided with ammunition. They every now and then fire a shot at the allies, but from the great distance, this desultory warfare has little effect.

As to the strength of the garrison, all pretense at accurate conjecture must be vain; but the information given by deserters, as well as the observation of British officers, leads to the belief that the Russian soldiers within the town and its outworks amount to nearly 40,000 men. Besides these there are the 10,000 sailors of the fleet, all of whom have been taken out of their ships to man the batteries. Such a force might, indeed, defend the place for months, if actuated by such courage and fanaticism as inspired the Turks at Silistria. It is about thrice as great as is actually required by the extent of the fortifications, and might perhaps create only confusion and panic if crowded together within the limits of the town. But a third of it is probably kept on the northern shore of the bay, to be brought into use as the necessities of the defence demand. It would be of great importance to stop this